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CONTACT: Jeff Mammenga, Media Coordinator, (605) 773-6000,
Jeff.Mammenga@state.sd.us

Informative *Our South Dakota* exhibit opening at Cultural Heritage Center

PIERRE, S.D. -- What do George Washington's nose, a Columbian mammoth and Cookies n' Cream ice cream have in common?

They are all part of the new *Our South Dakota: Big Land/Big Ideas/Big Heart* exhibition opening at the South Dakota Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre on Saturday, Oct. 29. A reception will be held from 1-4:30 p.m. CDT with free admission to the museum and refreshments.

"*Our South Dakota* creates a whimsical and fun environment for informally learning all about our great state," said Ronette Rumpca, acting museum director. "Visitors will get a clear picture of the physical realities of the state and how those realities shape our attitudes and the communities we form."

Geared to appeal to a K-6th grade audience and families, the exhibition features many hands-on activities.

Four major themes – comparisons, landscapes, big ideas, and community – run throughout the exhibition. Visitors can compare themselves to Washington's nose and draw themselves into an animal wall to see how they compare to a mammoth, bison and prairie dog. They can sit in a combine cab and "harvest" corn. A community picnic table invites visitors to share a card game. Ten-foot photographs show off the variety and beauty of South Dakota's landscapes. Visitors can handle pelts, feathers and claws from the animals that make those landscapes their home.

"My first impression when I walked into the gallery and saw Washington's nose was 'Wow – I hope he doesn't catch a cold!'" said Jay D. Vogt, director of the South Dakota State Historical Society, headquartered at the Cultural Heritage Center. "This exhibit is jam-packed with exciting things to do and see. It's a great introduction to our state overall, as well as being so accessible to young visitors. Everyone will enjoy this."

Museum hours are 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. CDT Monday-Saturday and 1-4:30 on Sundays and most holidays. The museum is closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's and Easter. There is a small admission fee for adults ages 18-and-older. Children 17-and-younger and members of the State Historical Society are free.

Call (605) 773-3458 for more information.

Cutline information: Visitors to the new exhibit at the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre will be able to have their picture taken by life-size replicas of South Dakota

wildlife – both from the present and the past. (Photo courtesy South Dakota State Historical Society)

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The South Dakota State Historical Society is a division of the Department of Tourism. The Department of Tourism is comprised of Tourism, the South Dakota Arts Council, and the State Historical Society. The Department is led by Secretary James D. Hagen. The State Historical Society is headquartered at the South Dakota Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre. The center houses the society's world-class museum, the archives, and the historic preservation, publishing and administrative/development offices. Call (605) 773-3458 or visit www.history.sd.gov for more information. The society also has an archaeology office in Rapid City; call (605) 394-1936 for more information.